TURNAROUND

The Vulcan waited in his cabin, certain that Kirk would come soon. Spock was quite aware that there would be retribution for his act, but he wasn't sure what form it would take. Death, perhaps, by Kirk's phaser, or maybe by a nameless assassin. But not yet. Not until the Captain confronted him with what he'd done. Spock knew Kirk that well. One thing he didn't have to fear was the tantalus field. That issue had been settled long ago, and he could trust Kirk to keep their bargain. Whatever happened between them would be more honest and open. Spock was confident that, in his Captain's eye, his past loyalty rated more than anonymous 'blinking out'--he had at least earned the chance to fight for his life, no matter what he had done.

Janice Lester had been executed immediately, of course. That was expected. What had surprised Spock was that Kirk did not carry it out with his bare hands. Certainly he had enough justification. But when the transference reversed, Kirk had calmly followed through with Janice's own plans and had the woman put to death. The body of her doctor was discovered soon after, with a knife firmly lodged in his chest. So now there was no one left who knew the truth of what had happened or who cared. Expect Spock.

He kicked off his boots, tugged off the satin shirt, and lay back on the bed relaxed, unfrightened of what was surely to come. Struggled with his Captain always amused him. Kirk was the only human who had ever been able to match him wit to wit, logic to cunning. An excellent opponent in chess or in life. And an even better partner.

It was difficult to know when that trust had developed into a stronger feeling--at least on his part. Perhaps it was when he'd glimpsed the softer, compassionate side of his Captain in the other one. It had been very appealing. Of course, it had no place in this universe. That gentleness would be tantamount to suicide here. Yet it was hard to forget, and impossible to deny that it made him view his own Kirk in a different light. The magnetic beauty of that face and body, the quick grace, the humor in the hidden smile--he'd seen it all before, but only absently, merely as part of the man he had chosen to follow. But he began to notice after that, admire and even yearn for it. He had begun to wonder how it would feel to have that body yield to him, what it would be like to master that implacable will and melt it into submissive passion. They were irritating, those unproductive thought not because he had them, but because they were impractical. Kirk was too cautious ever to give that much of himself, as the Captain's numerous women had discovered. Marlena had died in a freak accident in the lab very soon after the incident with the alternate universe. Spock had no illusions as to the cause...although he had been startled to see a flash of regret in Kirk's eyes.

In spite of that, Spock did not believe Kirk was planning an accident for him. He didn't doubt that Kirk related to him far more than to any woman he'd had. Kirk even admitted, once, on a night when he was half-drunk and flushed with triumph from a recent battle, that Spock was the only one in the galaxy whom he really trusted. And the Vulcan also knew that that would be what made it so much harder for Kirk to accept what Spock had done to him.

The door opened to Kirk's master key, and the human strode into the room defiantly. He stopped short when he saw the Vulcan lying on the bed, arms behind his head casually. A myriad of emotions flashed across Kirk's face: anger, disappointment, hurt....

"I should kill you."

Spock didn't move. "It might be difficult, but you are at liberty to try."

"Damn you, I thought you would believe me. I didn't expect anyone else to, but I was sure you would know--" He broke off and leaned back against the dividing screen tiredly. "She almost won. That bitch almost took what was mine--mine! She even had you fooled."

Spock studied him through narrowed eyes. Was Kirk trying to give him an escape? The excuse they both needed to forget what had happened? It wouldn't work. Sooner or later it would come out, degree by degree, until they ended up killing each other. It was better to say it all now.

"I knew," he said quietly, and waited for the reaction.

Kirk's head jerked up. "What?"

"I knew about the transference. No need to look surprised; you were quite aware that I knew."

Kirk's jaw tightened. "So you really did-- Why? Why did you let it happen? Did you want command that badly? You could have taken it from her easily enough, that's sure."

"Aren't you really more interested in why I raped you?"

Spock saw Kirk's hands ball into fists as he held to the last strands of control; the Vulcan's cool words had flicked him like a whiplash. "You bastard," he said savagely, "you knew it was me all the time, and you still...did that. Wasn't it enough that you were going to let her kill me? Did you have to make it worse?"

"I had no intention of letting you die, Kirk. You may have every right to hate me now, but you must know I would have stopped her someway."

"Liar!" Kirk snapped. "You'd never have dared touch me if you thought I'd live to make you pay for it. You knew I'd kill you for what you did."

"For making you like it? Because you enjoyed it when I took you?"

In spite of his intentional goading, Kirk's lunge took Spock slightly off-guard. Kirk struck him twice before Spock managed to catch his arms and pin them down. He rolled Kirk over on the bed until he was on top of him. Licking the blood from the corner of his mouth, he smiled, and pushed his lower body against Kirk's, making him aware of the growing erection.

"You did like it, Kirk. More than that. You loved it. Remember how you squirmed beneath me? Fighting, yes...but fighting to put me deeper inside you. Tell me, it is different when a female reaches orgasm? I still have your nail marks on my back."

The gold-green eyes blazed up at him, the hard body straining against the Vulcan's brutal hold. "I'll kill you...I swear I'll kill you for this."

"Then it makes little difference if I give you more reason." He bent his mouth to Kirk's, but